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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 001139

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TAGS: PGOV PREL MZ ZI
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER BALOI DISCUSSES SADC APPROACH ON ZIMBABWE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman, Reasons 1.4(b+d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The Charge held a brief discussion on October 20 with Foreign Minister Oldemiro Baloi regarding the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) efforts on Zimbabwe. He explained Washington's concerns about the implementation of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement (GPA) and SADC's role as its guarantor. FM Baloi provided an overview of SADC's frustrations with Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, President Robert Mugabe's inflexibility as to power sharing, and SADC's plans for dealing with Zimbabwe. Baloi will attend a meeting of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security in Lesotho October 26-27 before traveling on for meetings in Harare October 28. The GRM and SADC seem unlikely to make any constructive statements on Zimbabwe in the near future. END SUMMARY.

CHARGE OUTLINES WASHINGTON'S CONCERNS

¶2. (C) On October 20, the Charge discussed by phone USG concerns regarding Zimbabwe with Mozambican Foreign Minister Oldemiro Baloi. The Charge raised the lack of the implementation of the provisions of the GPA, Mugabe's actions in defiance of the GPA, and SADC's role in overseeing the execution of the GPA. The Charge outlined steps Mugabe could take to show a commitment to democratic reform, including ending politicized arrests and prosecutions as well as violent land seizures, replacing the Reserve Bank Governor and Attorney General, ending media censorship, repealing emergency decrees restricting personal freedoms, and publicly committing to the drafting of a new constitution and the holding of national elections under international supervision and monitoring.

BALOI ON SADC AND ZIMBABWE

¶3. (C) Baloi responded that SADC was very worried about the situation in Zimbabwe, and claimed that Zimbabwe and Lesotho had been the two topics of discussion at the SADC Summit in Kinshasa in September. Baloi noted that SADC had "always believed the government of national unity was progressing" and was surprised by Morgan Tsvangirai's announcement last week that the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was disengaging from the transition government.

¶4. (C) The FM highlighted that there should be an internal process within Zimbabwe to resolve political conflicts before SADC can host a summit on the issue; the parties should meet, raise their concerns with the Council of Ministers, come to a consensus government position, and then raise that position with SADC. Despite this recommendation, Baloi noted he will travel to Lesotho for meetings on October 26-27 of the SADC

Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security where they will discuss Zimbabwe. Baloi told Charge he would then be traveling to Zimbabwe, for meetings in Harare on October 28. (NOTE: This falls upon the date of Mozambique's general elections. END NOTE.).

¶15. (C) Baloi said that SADC was trying to "anticipate problems" regarding Zimbabwe. For example, Baloi stated that last week he received advance notice that Tsvangirai was going to announce a boycott, and attempted to set up a meeting before the announcement between Guebuza and Tsvangirai to discuss the issue--yet Tsvangirai did not respond to the offer. Baloi also shared that they were "frustrated" that Tsvangirai did not talk to them before he acted--"we don't want to learn about these events from the press," he said. Baloi said that at the time of the phone call, noon local time, Mozambican President Armando Guebuza was to meet Tsvangirai in Manica province.

¶16. (C) The Charge asked Baloi if Mugabe had shown any flexibility on the issues of implementing the GPA. Baloi replied that Mugabe had not shown much thus far, but that Guebuza would have to be the one to talk to Mugabe about that issue. Baloi said Mugabe's intransigence--constantly going "forward and back" on progress--was having a negative impact, and that Mugabe must understand his actions are hurting SADC's reputation.

ZIMBABWE EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT SOON

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¶17. (C) Baloi mentioned the SADC Secretariat was busy preparing the necessary documents for a discussion on Zimbabwe. He said they are lacking former South African President and SADC-appointed mediator for Zimbabwe Thabo Mbeki's mediation report from 2008, which is necessary to complete the discussion--the Secretariat anticipates Mbeki's mediation report will arrive before next week's summit in Lesotho. The FM mentioned SADC probably would host an "extraordinary summit soon" where the two topics of discussion would be the delay of the customs union, which is set to be established by 2010, and Zimbabwe.

COMMENT: GRM GIVES EXCUSES, SADC UNLIKELY TO PUSH MUGABE

¶18. (C) Baloi's comments on SADC's surprise over the announcement of Tsvangirai's boycott seem disingenuous. Tsvangirai and MDC have, on multiple occasions, made pleas to SADC to reengage on the issue of the implementation of the GPA. SADC, as guarantor of the agreement, has chosen not to address MDC's concerns regarding the outstanding GPA issues - namely the appointment of Reserve Bank Governor Gono and Attorney General Tomana, the refusal to swear in the MDC-designated Deputy Minister of Agriculture Bennett, and the continued arrest, detainment and harassment of MDC parliamentarians. Additionally, Baloi's statement that Zimbabwe was a main topic of discussion at the SADC Summit in Kinshasa is misleading, since SADC evidently chose not to address the Zimbabwe issue during the meeting in a meaningful way. Blaming Mugabe for SADC's damaged reputation, rather than accepting responsibility for SADC's disengagement from the issue, is telling of how the region probably will deal with the failures of the agreement.

CHAPMAN